

Szwarga Family

planting churches in New Zealand

Prayer Letter | July 2026

We assisted in two churches' new Bible handouts last month. In two hours in Hamilton, we distributed 30 Bibles at Waikato University and shared the gospel with many interested students. In Tauranga, we set up on the State Highway outside of the new church property and gave out 12 Bibles with a young couple visiting church the following day. The mobilization of the church is one of the highlights of the Bible handouts for us, with easily enough workers in both locations for multiple stands to be run in the future, just as HBC has started doing.

Through posting on social media about our handouts, there are ten churches throughout New Zealand who are planning to start up a Bible stand. Providentially, a sign shop owner emailed us (while we are at the Hamilton handout) informing us of his desire to use his "gift" of signage to get the gospel out. He had no idea about the Bible stands at that stage. Those churches are waiting on the 2,300 Bibles and New Testaments that leave Chicago this week. I have difficulty sourcing even 50 Bibles at a time here to handout, which we would go through in a month easily just at HBC! Now, multiply that by ten churches. It is a pity that in an English-speaking country our bottleneck is not workers, money, time, or soft ground (each Bible is given because it's requested, not forced), but the simple Word of God. **Please pray the shipping would be expedited** as there's a 40-50 day ETA. We project a second order will be needed shortly after receiving the first if the passion for this ministry converts into reality.

One of our good friends suggested adding a "free Bible" form onto realbibleanswers.co.nz, which is the home of the New Zealand Gospel Films. There is no solid option for free Bibles within New Zealand, the main one being a version that has more footnotes and commentary than it does scripture. If there's this much demand in a town of 10,000, what does it look like scaled nationally? This same friend of ours, Phil Hardy, started carrying Bibles to distribute as people had need, among many other materials and methods he used. Phil was the first new believer we worked with after moving here in 2022. We had the privilege to disciple him and his wife through GIBC, Tauranga. This past week, Phil passed away suddenly of a heart attack. He spent the only three Christian years of his life, sprinting to the finish line in his witness for Christ. Well over 100 unbelievers attended his funeral and heard the gospel clearly preached. More of them were shocked by his transformation as a Christian than they were of his passing. What a testimony he had! **Be praying for the salvation of his friends and family, especially his son Shane.**

A highlight for Phil was the annual Bible Revival, which he missed by just a few days. There was a tribute to him at the event, as he was well-known by many within our independent Baptist churches for his passion and joy. We appreciate you praying for the Bible Revival. Our church was blessed with the preaching and fellowship, with four recently added members attending their first revival. It was a privilege to preach on the topic of initiative: *Where's a Jonathan?* from 1 Samuel 14. Pastor Jono also announced the *Gospel of Luke* project that we will be publishing in early 2027. More details coming later.

We received a call from a lady near Wellington who had watched a NZ Gospel Film and had questions regarding salvation. After witnessing to her, we prescribed reading through the Gospel of John and praying for God to show her that Jesus is the only way. Several days later, she had a few things happen to her that she knows was God answering that prayer, however she is not yet saved, and the devil is fighting. **We ask for you to pray for her as she meets with a friend of ours one hour from her, that he would be able to lead her to the Lord.**

HBC has had a stable run, with a few new members in July, increased financial responsibility from the church (now 85% self-sustaining), and several regularly-attending visitors from the Bible handout. **It is our prayer that many of those not yet assimilated would grow in grace and Christian maturity.** We are seeing 4-5 visitors weekly, so it has been a balancing act ensuring no one falls through the cracks. **Developing relationships with several young couples in the church has been a fruitful ministry recently, and we pray for their heart of service and love for God to grow.**

Upcoming events: August 8, 3on3 Basketball Outreach; September 5, Limuel's Ordination.
Thank you for praying!

Josh, Alyse, Bentley, Raelynn and Ellie Szwarga



Phil's Funeral



HBC Bible Handout



Bible Revival



Bible Handouts

